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Ms. SCHWARTZ.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday morning of this week I had the opportunity to recognize and honor 53 elderly widows of veterans of World War II and the Korean War.

The sacrifices of that Great Generation are legendary, and they are a reminder of the sacrifice of the current generation of our military men and women who have heeded the call to service in defense of our Nation. Their patriotism, their willingness to put themselves in harm's way, possibly to pay the ultimate price for our Nation, should give us all pause.

So, Mr. Speaker, I stand here with deep gratitude and respect for the sacrifices of all of our troops, but especially for the 3,124 Americans killed in Iraq and those tens of thousands injured.

I stand here with great sympathy for the mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, whose loss is irreplaceable. I stand here tonight firmly and strongly in support of this resolution, in support of the troops, and in opposition to the President's escalation of our military involvement in the war in Iraq.

Let there be no misunderstanding. The men and women serving our Nation in our Armed Forces will continue to receive the support they require during their training, while they are in theater and when they return home.

It is in honor of their service and the sacrifices of their family, and the love of our country that we share that I stand to make it clear that the President's plan for Iraq to escalate the number of troops and to continue his failed conduct of this war is wrong.

Escalation of this war will not make our Nation safer. Escalation of this war will not stabilize Iraq. Escalation of this war will not move us closer to bringing our troops home, and escalation of this war will not better protect Americans from those terrorists who would stop at nothing to bring grave danger to our Nation and our allies. It is for these reasons that the President's escalation of the war in Iraq is wrong.

At a time when so many current and former military leaders, as well as the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, recognize the need for political, rather than military solutions to the ever increasing violence, the President is so gravely misguided in sending more of our men and women into combat in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is the answer to a simple question: Do you believe that an escalation of this war will bring our troops home sooner, and will it help the Iraqis achieve the national reconciliation needed to bring a lasting peace to their nation? I and the majority of Americans do not think so.

We believe the facts are clear. Escalation of this war fails to address the administration's strategic and diplomatic failures. It does not move us closer to success.

What we now need to succeed in Iraq is an overwhelming political and diplomatic force, not more American combat troops. Instead, the President should be working to end U.S. combat involvement in Iraq. To do so, he must demand that the Iraqis take charge of their internal security, should demand that the Iraqi President take the lead in national reconciliation, he should engage all the regional parties to prevent this war from escalating regionally and to explore every diplomatic and political solution to end this war.

Finally, the President must be accountable for his actions to this Congress and to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, over the first 6 weeks of the Democratic control of Congress, we have begun to move our Nation in a new direction, to restore credibility and ethics in this Chamber and to put the interests of everyday Americans in the forefront. There is so much more to do, here at home, and in our relations internationally, to better ensure the security and opportunity for all Americans.

The war in Iraq overshadows all that we do. The war has already cost this Nation so much: young lives lost, greater uncertainty and instability in the Middle East, greater hostility towards our own Nation, and financial costs that will take years to repay. So it is timely and right that we take action now to change direction and strategy in Iraq.

I stand with the majority of Congress in support of this resolution, in support of our troops, and in opposition to the escalation of U.S. combat troops in Iraq. This resolution sends the President a very strong message. It is our hope and the hope of the American people that he heeds it.